#13994446856 ID: 98077491 HD170.C46 1994 no.9

The Bureau of Land Management Service Center Newsletter September 1994

CENTER SCENE

Buyouts Offered One More Time

The Department of the Interior has approved another buyout. As a result, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is authorized to offer 100 buyouts to employees who resign, as well as to employees eligible for optional and voluntary early retirement. Since the buyout legislation expires in March 1995, another buyout will not be offered.

As in the past, positions eligible to apply for the buyout payment have been prioritized to consider Full Time Equivalency (FTE) reduction mandates, National Performance Review (NPR) streamlining initiatives, and the specific organizational objective of reducing positions.

Employees can apply for the buyout from August 15, 1994, through close of business September 30, 1994. BLM will inform employees as to whether they have been accepted for a buyout on or after October 1, 1994. Employees who are granted a buyout must leave BLM's rolls between October 1, 1994, and January 3, 1995. While it is highly unlikely, BLM may consider delaying an employee's separation date if his or her services are needed to ensure the completion of a particular project. Should such a delay be warranted, the employee must be off the rolls no later than March 31, 1997.

Editor's Note: More detailed information on the buyout is available in Information Bulletin No. SC-94-244.

Education Award Recipients

On July 27, Service Center Director Larry Bembry presented the FY 94-95 Education Awards to Angie Kumar (SC-610), Maria Martinez (SC-632), and Judy Schnittker (SC-632). The recipients were selected for the award by a panel of their peers. The $700 awards are to be used for training or college education to further their career goals within BLM.

Martinez has been with BLM since 1985 and is working towards an Associate Degree in Public Administration. She has worked in Records, the Service Center Director's Office, the EEO Office, and is currently in Personnel. Schnittker started with BLM 3 years ago in the Branch of Photo Imaging and has worked in Personnel for the last year and a half. Schnittker is focusing her studies in the fields of human relations and business ethics. Kumar, who has worked in BLM's Division of Finance for the past 6 years, already has a degree in education. This is her second award, which she is using to complete the education requirements to get into the accounting job series.

Education award recipients with SCD Larry Bembry are l-r: Maria Martinez, Judy Schnittker, and Angie Kumar.

The Service Center Education Awards Program annually offers up to four, $700 awards to employees GS-9 and below, who are in one-grade interval positions. The program is designed to pay for training and/or college courses so that employees may acquire skills and knowledge in order to progress in their chosen career field. Employees can only be selected for the award twice.

Bembry, in presenting this year's awards, encouraged employees to apply for the education award when it is announced. He stated, "Education is a real key to career growth and the Education Awards Program is an excellent way of assisting employees in meeting their career objective."

Personnel News

New Employees:

Dorothy Butler, SC-615, Supv Operating Accountant
Scott Marshall, SC-613, Systems Accountant

Separations:

Don Friebus, SC-616, Voucher Examiner
Janice McDowell, DWO-465, Land Records Spec
Joseph McDowell, SC-616, File Clerk
Christine Pino, SC-651, Summer Aid
Geno Rask, SC-616, Voucher Examiner

A LOOK INSIDE

- East Meets West: Chinese Delegation Visits Service Center 2
- Valuing Diversity, Creativity, and Hard Work 3
- NPR Lab Notes 3
- Plan Ahead! 4
- Labor/Management Relations: New Union Contract 4
- Employee Awards 4

East Meets West
Chinese Delegation Visits Service Center

BLM representatives pose outside the SC with Chinese delegation during a break between sessions.

A delegation from the State Land Administration of the People's Republic of China visited the Service Center (SC) on July 25 and 26. The State Land Administration is the equivalent of BLM in China. The group traveled here to study GIS applications in land management, to gather information on software and hardware management, and to learn more about institutional arrangements for science and technology and about the organizational design for centers like the SC.

> *"I am deeply moved by your kindness and friendship."*

The delegation was greeted at a reception hosted by Service Center Director Larry Bembry. The group included four delegates from the Administration's China Land Surveying and Planning Institute: Liu Guang-jin, Director; Zha Zhong-xiang, Director of the Information Center; Jiang Wen-biao, Deputy Director of the Information Center; and Yang Wen-kui, Chief of the Information Research Division. The other delegate, He Zhan, who acted as interpreter for the group, is the Project Coordinator for the Administration's Foreign Affairs Department.

Bembry told the group they would see our design to bring land management into the 21st century. "You will see the best technology we have regarding remote sensing and GIS applications," Bembry stated. After presenting the delegates with gifts, Bembry told the group that the SC would be glad to answer any questions the delegates might have after they returned home and to share information with them in the future. Liu responded, "I am deeply moved by your kindness and friendship. It is very friendly—family style."

Other presentations during the visit included "Public Lands in Perspective" by Jim Muhn (SC-210), "New Trends in Land Management" by Lee Barkow (SC-210), "GIS Applications" by Steve Gregonis (SC-214), and "Institutional Arrangements for Science and Technology" by Bruce Van Haveren (SC-210).

The trip was part of a 1989 U.S.-China Science and Technology Agreement, which established a long-term protocol to facilitate the exchange of information and personnel for resource management planning and land information systems. The western portion of the 3-week tour was coordinated by Bruce Van Haveren. Besides the SC, other stops included the Anasazi Heritage Center, the Escalante Ruins Historical Site, Mesa Verde National Park, and BLM's Farmington District and the Taos Resource Area Offices. The delegation spent several days in the Washington Office and returned to China via New York on August 7.

A BLM delegation recently visited China in August to acquire an understanding of the temperate steppe ecosystems of northern China. The delegation discussed Chinese involvement in the Ecosystem Comparison Initiative, a BLM-initiated project to compare similar ecosystems across North America and Eurasia, and developed contacts that will be necessary for the Initiative to succeed internationally.

Raft trip down the Rio Chama River in the Taos Resource Area.

中华人民共和国
国家土地管理局

State Land Administration People's Republic of China

China's State Land Administration was founded in 1986. Although 30 provinces of China have set up land management departments or territorial departments on provincial, prefectural (city), county, and township levels, the Administration is responsible for the unified land management policies of the country as a whole. It is also responsible for the implementation of nationwide land policies, laws, and regulations, and for the inspection of illegal activities.

Other major responsiblities of the Administration include:

- Developing a nationwide land management strategy.
- Formulating a nationwide survey plan.
- Forecasting short- and long-term land use demands.
- Administering land use rights.
- Resolving land ownership disputes.
- Developing criteria for land classification and valuation.
- Establishing and improving the land statistics, cadastral file, and land use information dynamic monitoring systems.

Valuing Diversity, Creativity, and Hard Work

Armando Lazarte, an SC employee on the BLM-MMS Liaison Team, was recently recognized by the Denver Federal Executive Board (DFEB) for his outstanding contributions to the Hispanic Employment Program (HEP).

Armando was a well-known musician and television star in his native Peru until 1970, when a military junta took power. Dismayed by the junta's actions, Armando left for the U.S. and settled in Washington, D.C. He initially worked as a music teacher and presented a one-man-band show, performing for congressional receptions, restaurants, lounges, and Latin-American embassies' affairs.

The 1982 recession forced a career change, so Armando decided to study computer programming and management. A succession of government and private industry jobs ultimately landed Armando at the SC in November of 1991.

As part of the BLM-MMS Liaison Team, Armando has ample opportunity to tap into his two strongest qualities: creativity and persistence. "My job is to help solve problems between BLM and the Minerals Management Service, and also to take the initiative to prevent problems from developing in the first place. We are always trying to create better ways of doing things."

Armando's creativity and persistence have been a real asset in his work with the HEP. Within a few months of arriving at the SC, Armando was named the HEP Manager and immediately set to work pulling together perhaps the most ambitious diversity celebration ever seen at the SC.

The resulting 4-hour main event featured five local Hispanic television journalists, a mariachi show, a flamenco show, and a Latin show. In addition, a five-part video series on Hispanic history and culture was presented over a 1-month period, along with a 3-hour workshop.

The DFEB was so impressed that they asked Armando to organize a training seminar. Working long hours for 5 months, Armando pulled in high-powered network television talent like Jackie Nespral (NBC), John Quinones (ABC), Juan Vasquez (CBS), and talent from the local stations. People who normally charge $5,000 or more, appeared for free.

Persistence once again paid off. Juan Vasquez, when he autographed a photo for Armando, wrote, "To a man who gave a new meaning to the word 'persistent.'" At the seminar, local TV news personality Thelma Gutierrez introduced Armando as "the man who left more than a hundred messages on my voice mail!"

Armando, always eager to improve his leadership skills, recently completed the "Leadership Development Program" organized by the Center for Creative Leadership, and the "Principle-Centered Leadership Week" presented by the Covey Leadership Center. Eager to share his new knowledge, Armando gave a presentation entitled "Creating Your Own Path to Success" this past June to a Cultural Awareness Training Conference presented by the Department of Health and Human Services and the IRS.

Armando's vision of diversity ultimately goes beyond the HEP or other single-focus programs. "We all need an awareness of cultural diversity," he observes. "Diversity, not sameness, is what made the United States great."

A National Performance Review Laboratory

If you're confused about all the different teams you've been hearing about, you're not alone. Teams are being created throughout the Bureau at an increasing rate to address various issues.

The National Performance Review (NPR) teams at the SC are actively flourishing. Some have been restructured, rechartered, sunsetted (closed out), and/or converted from teams to standing committees. (A team is created for a short-term, focused task as opposed to a committee, which is a long-term, ongoing, process-oriented group that becomes a permanent part of the organization.) Following is the current status of the teams:

- The Internal Communications Team, whose objective is to develop a plan for management to communicate changes to the workforce over the next year, will make its recommendations within the next 2-3 months.
- The Employee Needs Team is identifying hindrances to creativity and areas where the work environment could be improved. They have already made numerous recommendations to management.
- The Customer Relations Team is developing a customer service strategy that includes measures of customer service, customer satisfaction, and accountability and can be applied by each SC organizational unit in developing their own strategy.
- The Workflow/Process Improvement group was converted to a committee on a 6-month trial, and will be putting in place procedures developed by the Improvement Team. Watch for their kick-off campaign in early October.
- A new team has been formed (name undeveloped) to generate internal support for other teams at the SC in FY 95. This team will make recommendations within 2-3 months.
- The Mission and Organization Team and the Community Relations Team were both sunsetted after accomplishing their primary objectives.

Plan Ahead!

Successful retirement planning begins many years before you are actually ready to turn in your final paperwork. The earlier you are able to start comprehensive financial planning, the better your golden years will be.

Employees under the CSRS retirement system are customarily encouraged to attend a retirement course mid-career. However, they may attend any time they feel is appropriate. Employees under the FERS system are encouraged to attend a class shortly after entering on duty to learn about the system in order to make informed decisions about their retirement.

Several excellent courses are available to SC employees who want to develop better financial skills to prepare for their retirement. The following three courses are targeted for all employees: Retirement Planning, Office of Personnel Management (OPM); Planning for Retirement, Denver Learning Center (DLC); and Mid-Career Retirement, Denver Learning Center (DLC).

The OPM course is offered three times a year in Denver and tuition is $315. The DLC courses are specifically offered to Department of the Interior employees and are tuition free. The DLC retirement courses are taught by local financial planners who specialize in problems faced by Federal workers. The courses are scheduled eight times a year.

These three courses cover a number of important issues which include current Federal retirement benefits, financial planning principles, and financial requirements during retirement.

The DLC also sponsors a four-hour briefing for FERS employees entitled "FERS/Thrift Savings Plan Information for FERS Employees."

If you are interested in attending a retirement course, please ensure that you notify your supervisor when your Individual Training Plan is developed in October.

DLC nominees are prioritized to allow those closest to retirement to attend first.

Employee Awards

Employees approved for awards between June 1, 1994, and August 15, 1994.

Service Center

On-the-spot Cash Awards

Susan Broderick	SC-610
Karen Shae Martinez	SC-610
Thomas Andrich	SC-652
Carol Godwin	SC-610
Jeannie Schuettpelz	SC-610
Dena Reish	SC-652
Jennifer Kapus	SC-140
Randolph Hayes	SC-140
Robert Kyle	SC-140
Herman Weiss	SC-140

Performance Awards

Todd Adler	SC-613
Pat Fay	SC-610
Debra Powers	SC-616

Special Act Awards

M.J. Smart	SC-212
Gordon Jennings	SC-630
Carl Anderson	SC-657
Mary Stultz	SC-214

DWO

On-the-Spot Cash Awards

Gloria Aranda (2)	DWO-465
Roberta Truax	DWO-432

Performance Awards

Karen Martin	DWO-463
Sandra Dilbeck	DWO-463
Sandra Foust	DWO-463
Doris Stuart	DWO-463
Barbara Troyer	DWO-463
Donamarie Beatty	DWO-463
Ron Maldonado	DWO-463
Gary Slagel	DWO-453
Karl Smith	DWO-453

Special Act Awards

Graham Miller	DWO-450
Gary Slagel	DWO-453
Karl Smith	DWO-453
David Lobb	DWO-453
Sharon McCullough	DWO-452
Donna Barron	DWO-451
Solomon Katz	DWO-452
John Reitsma	DWO-445

LABOR/MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

New Union Contract

After a year and a half, the Service Center and NFFE Local 1945 have signed a contract. All bargaining unit employees and supervisors were sent a copy of the contract for their information. Bargaining unit employees and supervisors are encouraged to read the contract as it is not only significantly different from the old contract but also contains much more information. Some of the articles which have changed are: Union Rights, Employee Rights, Grievance Procedure, Leave, Job Sharing, Discrimination, Medical Qualifications and Determinations, and Employee-Attended Meetings.

In the near future, information sessions on the contract will be offered jointly by management and union representatives to all affected employees. When the sessions are offered, employees are encouraged to attend so that they can gain familiarity with the contract and also have any questions they may have about the contract answered.

The Service Center Social Organization (SCSO) held its annual employee picnic on August 12 in Centennial Park.